

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8093

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0606

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, XX, MA

SUBJECT: CHANGES IN FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 051768, (B) TANANARIVE 462

1. FOLLOWING IS COUNTRY TEAM'S VIEWS ON IMPACT OF INCREASED COSTS OF FUTURE FMTP:

A. NEW COSTING SCHEME WILL NOT HAVE ANY EFFECT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH MADAGASCAR SINCE NO TRAINING IN US NOW IN PROGRESS, AND NONE LIKELY FOR SOME TIME TO COME. WE UNDERSTAND MADAGASCAR IS TECHNICALLY ELIGIBLE FOR SUCH TRAINING UNDER FMS CASH PURCHASES, BUT MALAGASY HAVE NOT ASKED FOR IT NOR HAVE WE PROPOSED IT.

B. PILOT (FIXED-WING AND HELICOPTER) TRAINING WOULD PROBABLY BE OF MOST INTEREST TO GDRM, FOLLOWED BY TRAINING ON UNSPECIFIED SOON-TO-BE-DELIVERED MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND ATTENDANCE AT ADVANCED OFFICER SCHOOLS. GDRM, AS NOTED ABOVE, DOES NOT HAVE ANY TRAINING IN US IN PROGRESS. FUTURE TRAINING WILL DEPEND ON SOURCE OF NEW EQUIPMENT (SEE BELOW) WHILE CURRENT GDRM POLICY PRECLUDES SENDING MALAGASY OFFICERS TO ADVANCED OFFICER TRAINING IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

C. WE BELIEVE ANY TRAINING IN US WOULD BENEFIT US NATIONAL INTERESTS, ESPECIALLY AS COUNTERWEIGHT TO SOVIET AND CHINESE INFLUENCE HERE, BUT POLITICAL REALITIES ARE SUCH THAT WE  
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DO NOT EXPECT GDRM TO REQUEST TRAINING. MOREOVER,

PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA ANNOUNCED LAST MONTH THAT SOVIETS ARE DONATING ONE HELICOPTER TO MADAGASCAR AND THAT GDRM MAY OBTAIN (PURCHASE OR GIFT?) OTHER UNSPECIFIED MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM UNSPECIFIED SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

D. NOT APPLICABLE.

E. SINCE GDRM HAS NOT HAD TRAINEES IN US RECENTLY, FMTP COST INCREASE MAY NOT BE RELEVANT TO MALAGASY. IF GDRM WISHES TO PLACE TRAINEES IN US, COST WILL BE A FACTOR ONLY IN ABSOLUTE TERMS AND NOT IN COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS RATES. AT PRESENT, THERE ARE ONLY TWO EXTERNAL PROGRAMS FOR TRAINING MALAGASY: (1) ONE HELICOPTER PILOT BEING TRAINED IN INDONESIA, AND (2) CANADIAN MISSION HERE TO TRAIN CIVILIAN PILOTS WHICH ALSO, SUB ROSA, TRAINS MILITARY PILOTS. PROGRAMS ARE BEING FUNDED BY INDONESIANS AND CANADIANS, RESPECTIVELY. SOVIET GIFT OF MI-8 HELICOPTERS, AND POTENTIAL GDRM PURCHASES OF SOVIET FIXED-WING CARGO AIRCRAFT AND OTHER MI-8S MAY RESULT IN TRAINING OF MALAGASY PILOTS IN USSR. GDRM DECISIONS ON PURCHASES ARE CERTAIN TO BE MORE POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED THAN COST-FACTORED, AND WILL BE PRIMARY BASIS AS TO WHERE TO SEND TRAINEES. ALTHOUGH FRANCE IS TRADITIONAL SUPPLIER AND TRAINER OF MALAGASY MILITARY, IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN SERIOUS COMPETITION WITH US OR SOVIETS FOR SALE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AT THIS TIME.

2. COMMENT: WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT GDRM WILL BUY ANY US EQUIPMENT, REGARDLESS OF COST OR QUALITY. DELIVERY OF SOVIET HELICOPTER (ALREADY IN COUNTRY) IS FIRST STEP AWAY FROM PREDOMINANT WESTERN INFLUENCE WHICH STILL TENDS TO PREVAIL AMONG MOST SENIOR MALAGASY MILITARY. HOWEVER, AND DESPITE COOLNESS IN US-GDRM RELATIONS AT MOMENT, WE WOULD MUCH PREFER TO SEE MALAGASY TRAINED IN US (OR FRANCE) THAN IN ANY COMMUNIST COUNTRY SO THAT WE CAN MAINTAIN OUR INFLUENCE WITH THEIR MILITARY.SHEINBAUM

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